Commentary

Ed Butler's "Square World"

Not content with armchair philosophy, activist Ed Butler has taken to the streets and the mass media to promote his "square" revolution.

The 35-year-old Butler flavors his message to youth with promises to "Tell it like it is" and uses his "Thumbs Up!" sign for positive thinking.

Flashes of Butler and his philosophy can be caught on "The Square World of Ed Butler" (10:30 p.m., Sundays, Channel 5).

In a world ill-disposed toward philosophers, Butler is having difficulty making his message known. The possibility of his doing so through our media of communication is one of the most pertinent questions he poses.

Since November his Los Angeles-based series has been concerned with campus turmoil and "revolutions" in drugs, cinema, music, communications, pets and fashions. Coverage of each "revolution" is crammed into one or two half-hour shows.

Regular features of the show include Butler's editorials, personality profiles, music by the "Sons of Liberty" rock group, debates and question-and-answer sessions with the audience. The various segments are called pages and Butler flips them so fast that the viewer has little time to see or absorb what is there.

A guest gets only a couple minutes on-camera. He is barely identified. The less well known ones remain a mystery.

Adding to the total impression of disorganization is the use of "youth-appeal" underground film techniques.

Slickly packaged, Butler the philosopher is an ordinary master of ceremonies on his own show. Forced to rush, he comes across as pushy. In person he is gentle, reasonable and unassuming.

Butler became a "professional revolutionary" about six years ago. Before that he'd been an art illustrator, model and advertising man.

His philosophy is distilled in his 1968 book, "Revolution Is My Profession." Since then he's edited and published a now near-defunct magazine, "The Westwood Village Square." His latest venture in print is "Aware," a monthly magazine based in California.

In the mass media Butler has trouble clarifying his ideas. On his show he is hemmed in by highly stylized production tech-

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SAVE HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS ON BLUE DOLPHIN POOLS